

Its heritage was cleaner, better life,
Within the richest storehouse of them all.
With timber, oil and gas and salt and coal,
It bargained in the world's huge market-
place.

The mountain empire reached a mighty goal;
It never ran a pauper's sordid race.

And best of all, it sire a hardy flock
Whose fame will grow with centuries to be,
Tough as a white-oak stump or limestone
rock,

The mountaineers who always shall be free.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today, I am honored to celebrate the great State of West Virginia. June 20, 2006, commemorates the 143rd birthday of the "Wild and Wonderful" State of West Virginia marking a milestone in both national and state history.

The historical importance of West Virginia should not be underestimated. Born in 1863 out of the turmoil of the Civil War, it has become synonymous with dedication, hard work, and integrity. West Virginia emerged as a staunch supporter of individuality, freedom, and tolerance. The common experience of the Civil War forged a unique bond of fraternity and camaraderie between its citizens. The commendable citizens of our great State exemplify all of the aforementioned attributes through their unending commitments to their jobs, communities, and families.

People, however, are not the sole attraction to the State. The West Virginia experience is transforming and mesmerizing. Visitors from around the world enjoy the vibrantly lush forests, clearly flowing streams, and majestic snow-capped mountains, which provide excellent outlets for recreational activity. Hiking, mountain biking, hunting, fishing, whitewater rafting, skiing, and golfing are just a few of the amenities provided in the treasure that is West Virginia.

The culture of West Virginia rivals nature in beauty and intensity. Music, history, pottery, glass, and storytelling make up a patchwork quilt of extraordinary experiences. Each individual, young or old, visitor or native, is wrapped warmly into West Virginia's comforting blanket of culture and identity.

The West Virginia motto, "Mountaineers are always free," rings throughout the State with resounding force. Jerry West, Pearl Buck, Chuck Yeager, and Senator ROBERT C. BYRD are just a few of the influential people of our time from West Virginia. As of June 12, 2006, Senator BYRD has had the distinction of being the longest serving Senator in U.S. history. Clearly, West Virginia has provided and continues to provide successful and inspiring individuals to the world.

Sadly, West Virginia has seen great tragedy in the last year: In four separate mining accidents, 19 miners have lost their lives. Coal production is woven into the fabric of our State. While we always knew of the risks, los-

ing loved ones is always devastating. Following those accidents, the Nation finally focused on what West Virginia has long known—we must improve mine safety. Currently, 40,000 direct jobs are supplied by the coal industry's influence in the State. This month, the MINER Act was signed into law by President Bush. This momentous step in mine safety legislation will bring greater safety to the brave men and women who work in the mines. The important role coal plays in the culture, economy, and history of West Virginia cannot be understated. The jobs provided through the coal industry contribute to the well-being of thousands of West Virginians, they increase State development, and they enhance the economic vitality of the State. It is our responsibility to make sure that miners are safe, secure, and protected.

In addition to some of the hardships our State has faced since its 142nd birthday, we also have a lot to celebrate: The Toyota Motor Manufacturing Plant located in Buffalo, WV, recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. Since its inception in 1996, the plant has expanded five times and has been the single most productive engine and transmission facility in all of North America for 4 consecutive years. In 1996, 350 jobs were provided by the Toyota plant. By 2007, it is estimated that 1,150 workers will be employed by the organization.

Additionally, the West Virginia University football team won the right to participate in the 2006 Sugar Bowl in Atlanta, GA. In a stunning victory, the West Virginia University Mountaineers upset the University of Georgia Bulldogs 38 to 35. The Mountaineers finished the season ranked fifth overall in the Associated Press poll tying the highest ranking in school history.

I am proud to represent West Virginia. I am proud to live in West Virginia, and I am proud to be called a West Virginian. Today, it is my great honor to celebrate and commemorate the 143rd birthday of the "Wild and Wonderful" State of West Virginia. •

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like the RECORD to reflect that I was necessarily absent on Monday June 19, 2006, for rollcall vote No. 175, the confirmation of the nomination of Sandra Segal Ikuta, of California, to be U.S. circuit court judge. Unfortunately, my flight from South Dakota to Washington, DC, was delayed due to bad weather. Had I been present for this vote, I would have voted in favor of the nomination.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHARLES E. MUNIER

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I wish today to express our Nation's deepest thanks and gratitude to a special man and his family. I recently received

word of the untimely death of LTC Charles Munier of Wheatland, WY, while serving his country in the war on terrorism. Lieutenant Colonel Munier passed away on Monday, June 12, 2006, at Walter Reed Hospital following a stroke suffered while serving in Afghanistan where he was helping to train the Afghan army.

Lieutenant Colonel Munier served in Wyoming National Guard as facilities manager for Camp Guernsey, Wyoming's training center for both Guard and Active-Duty military. He is remembered by his brother soldiers as a pivotal member of the Camp Guernsey staff and an outstanding officer who took his duties as a citizen soldier very seriously. In his civilian life, Lieutenant Colonel Munier worked for the Platte County Sheriff's Office as the jail administrator.

Lieutenant Colonel Munier epitomized the ethos of the citizen soldier. He did not hesitate to put down the plowshare and pick up the rifle when his country needed him. It is because of people like Charles Munier that we continue to live safe and free. America's men and women who answer the call of service and wear our Nation's uniform deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they willingly bear. They put everything on the line every day, and because of these folks, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

Lieutenant Colonel Munier is survived by his wife Nancy, his daughter Victoria Rice, and her husband Tim, and his brothers and sisters in arms of the Wyoming National Guard. Today we say goodbye to a husband, a father, and an American soldier. Our Nation pays its deepest respect to LTC Charles E. Munier for his courage, his love of country, and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life, and he remains a hero in death. All of Wyoming and, indeed, the entire Nation are proud of him.

INSTABILITY IN SOMALIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, given the continuing instability in Somalia, the growing tensions between the Transitional Federal Government and the Islamic Courts Union, ICU, and the worsening humanitarian conditions throughout the country, it is more essential than ever that the U.S. Government and the international community engage fully in efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict that has plagued Somalia for more than 15 years.

Most immediately, it is essential that the ICU recognize the legitimacy of the TFG and that it engage in good-faith efforts to support the TFG's role and authority as Somalia's legitimate Government. The ICU must take immediate actions to begin assisting the TFG to extend its authority to Mogadishu, and it must do so in a transparent and expeditious manner.